

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MANAGUA 3961

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR MAURICIO SOLAUN IN ARA/CEN

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, NU
SUBJECT: POSSIBLE VISIT BY AMBASSADOR SOLAUN TO PRESIDENT
SOMOZA IN MIAMI

1. EMBASSY UNDERSTANDS THAT A VISIT BY AMBASSADOR SOLAUN TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA AT THE MIAMI HEALTH INSTITUTE HAS BEEN BROACHED WITH NICARAGUAN AMBASSADOR SEVILLA SACASA. VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM HAVE CONSIDERED THE PROS AND CONS OF SUCH A VISIT. WE URGE THAT AMBASSADOR SOLAUN CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF THOSE PROS AND CONS BEFORE A DECISION IS MADE ON A VISIT TO PRESIDENT SOMOZA.

2. ARGUMENTS FOR SUCH A VISIT INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:
(A) THE VISIT WOULD BECOME KNOWN IMMEDIATELY IN NICARAGUA AND WOULD FACILITATE THE AMBASSADOR'S DEALINGS WITH ALL SECTORS OF THE SOMOZA REGIME WITH WHOM HE MIGHT COME IN CONTACT BEFORE HIS PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS AND FORMAL COURTESY CALLS.
(B) PRESIDENT SOMOZA WOULD INTERPRET THE VISIT AS A PERSONAL COURTESY WHICH COULD SET THE TONE FOR THE
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AMBASSADOR'S FUTURE DEALINGS WITH HIME.
(C) IT WOULD PROVIDE AMBASSADOR SOLAUN WITH FIRST-HAND INFORMATION ON SOMOZA'S CONDITION AND ON HIS PLANS FOR RETURNING TO NICARAGUA.

3. COUNTERING THESE POTENTIAL PLUSES ARE THE FOLLOWING CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) ATMOSPHERICS ARE AN EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT INGREDIENT IN THE PERCEPTION BY NICARAGUANS OF US-GON RELATIONS WITH THE ULTIMATE FOCUS CONSTANTLY ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AMBASSADOR AND PRESIDENT SOMOZA. WE BELIEVE THAT THOSE RELATIONS SHOULD NOT BE OPENED TO ADDITIONAL SPECULATION AND POSSIBLE MISINTERPRETATION PRIOR TO AMBASSADOR'S ARRIVAL IN MANAGUA. WHETHER THE MEETING BE PUBLICIZED OR NOT, WORD WOULD REACH MANAGUA RAPIDLY AND EACH RUMOR-MONGER WOULD BE HARD AT WORK TO EXPLAIN THE "SIGNIFICANCE" OF THE MEETING.

(B) ALL KINDS OF NICARAGUAN CIRCLES ARE ANXIOUS TO ESTABLISH A "SPECIAL RELATIONSHIP" WITH ANY AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. RUMORS ARE RIFE IN MANAGUA THAT LOCAL CUBANS AND LOCAL CUBAN-AMERICANS WITH STRONG MIAMI CONNECTIONS ARE CLAIMING THAT THEY HAVE SPONSORED AMBASSADOR SOLAUN FOR THE MANAGUA POST, THEREBY IMPLYING THAT THEY WILL SOMEHOW INFLUENCE HIM. MANY NICARAGUANS ARE OPENLY RESENTFUL THAT PRESIDENT SOMOZA HAS GATHERED SO MANY CUBANS AROUND HIM IN RUNNING CERTAIN OF HIS BUSINESS VENTURES AND THAT HE PERMITS SOME CUBANS (NOTABLY EDDIE RODRIGUEZ-FELIU) TO GET INVOLVED IN GON FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS. THUS, A VISIT TO SOMOZA IN MIAMI COULD SERVE TO REINFORCE THESE CLAIMS AND SUSPICIONS.

(C) AN OPPOSITION CONSERVATIVE PARTY (PCN) DEPUTY, JULIO MOLINA, RAISED IN CONGRESS ON AUGUST 17 A CONFIDENTIAL

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STITUTIONAL QUESTION CONCERNING SOMOZA'S RIGHT TO CONTINUE TO FUNCTION AS PRESIDENT IN VIEW OF HIS ALLEGED INCAPACITY TO EXERCISE FULLY THE FUNCTIONS OF THAT OFFICE. MOLINA, SUPPORTED BY OTHER PCN DEPUTIES, ARGUED THAT THE CONGRESS SHOULD ELECT A SUBSTITUTE AS CALLED FOR IN THE CONSTITUTION (ARTICLE 187). ALTHOUGH THE LIBERAL PARTY MAJORITY IN CONGRESS RULED MOLINA'S QUESTION OUT OF ORDER, PCN LEADERS COULD VIEW AMBASSADOR SOLAUN'S VISIT TO SOMOZA AS UNDERMINING THEIR CONSTITUTIONAL CASE AND PERHAPS AS DISCOURAGING THEM IN GENERAL.

4. ON BALANCE, EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT NO FURTHER ACTION BE TAKEN TO ENCOURAGE AN INVITATION FROM PRESIDENT SOMOZA FOR AMBASSADOR SOLAUN TO CALL ON HIM IN MIAMI. IF AMBASSADOR SEVILLA SACASA SHOULD, HOWEVER, INDICATE THAT PRESIDENT SOMOZA DESIRES SUCH A VISIT, WE RECOGNIZE THAT THERE WOULD BE PROBLEMS IN DECLINING SUCH AN INVITATION. IF THE AMBASSADOR AGREES WITH THE THRUST OF OUR THINKING, HE MIGHT WISH TO ADVANCE COMPELLING REASONS, SUCH AS SCHEDULING FAMILY TRAVEL OR OTHER LAST MOMENT COMPLICATIONS WHICH WOULD MAKE

IT VERY DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE, FOR HIM TO STOP
IN MIAMI. AS A POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE TO A VISIT, THE
AMBASSADOR MAY WISH, IF HE HAS NOT ALREADY DONE SO, TO
CABLE OR TELEPHONE SOMOZA TO WISH HIM A SPEEDY RECOVERY,
PRIOR TO THE AMBASSADOR'S DEPARTURE FROM WASHINGTON.
RUBENSTEIN

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